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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [GG](#) [RS](#)

SUBJECT: RUSSIA-GEORGIA: "ZERO RESULT" YAKOBASHVILI VISIT,
BAGAPSH DUE IN MOSCOW

REF: A. YEKATERINBURG 35

[1](#)B. MOSCOW 1335

Classified By: Charge Daniel A. Russell for reasons 1.4 (B/D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Russian officials told us that Georgian Reintegration Minister Yakobashvili's May 16-17 trip to Moscow yielded nothing "positive or substantive." Although DFM Karasin and other GOR officials discussed with Yakobashvili the key issues related to the separatist conflicts, the MFA expressed concern that Saakashvili selected Yakobashvili as his envoy to Moscow and was disappointed that he brought no new proposals. Russia reiterated its rejection of any change to the negotiating formats, while acknowledging the JCC for South Ossetia was frozen at least until the May parliamentary elections in Georgia. Abkhaz "President" Bagapsh is due to arrive in Moscow the evening of May 19, but MFA officials denied press reports that Bagapsh aimed to convince Moscow to sign off on a secret settlement plan. In contrast with earlier statements, the MFA welcomed EUR DAS Bryza's decision to visit Moscow in June and U.S. efforts to restrain Saakashvili. End summary.

Yakobashvili Trip Unproductive

[1](#)2. (C) GOR officials termed Georgian Minister of Reintegration Temur Yakobashvili's May 16-17 visit to Moscow a "zero-result" trip. MFA Fourth CIS Department Deputy Director Dmitriy Tarabrin told us May 19 that Yakobashvili met with DFM Grigoriy Karasin, GOR Special Negotiator for South Ossetia Yuriy Popov and Ambassador-at-large for CIS Affairs Valeriy Keniyakin. Russian and Georgian officials discussed all issues, including the April 16 Putin "instructions," Russia's pullout of the CIS sanctions, CIS peacekeepers' role in the zone of conflict, IDPs' return, and negotiation processes for Abkhazia and South Ossetia, but the MFA stressed that Yakobashvili brought no new proposals and all issues remained the same as before.

[1](#)3. (C) While Russia regularly has criticized Georgia for failing to send an envoy to Moscow to discuss the latest flare up in tensions, MFA Fourth CIS Department Deputy Director Aleksey Pavlovskiy told us that Yakobashvili was not what Russia had in mind. Recalling Yakobashvili's recent statements in Brussels on the Russian "fascist" government, which were reported widely in Russian press, Pavlovskiy stressed that Yakobashvili was not in a good position to seek a common language with Russian officials.

[1](#)4. (C) Popov said that Yakobashvili and the new Georgian Ambassador Kitsmareshvili's two-hour discussion with him and Keniyakin yielded nothing positive or substantive. Popov reiterated that he did not understand why Yakobashvili came to Moscow, when he had nothing new to offer and was not willing to make a compromise. Popov commented that the visit was likely "another pre-election gesture" by Saakashvili.

¶5. (C) In a recent press conference, Lavrov lashed out against Georgian attempts to change the negotiating processes for Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and called on Georgia to work within the current framework (ref A). MFA officials agreed that the Abkhazia conflict could be resolved only at the highest level between Saakashvili and Abkhaz "president" Bagapsh, who is due to arrive for another Moscow visit in the evening of May 19. All denied that there was a secret plan, for which Bagapsh was seeking a Moscow endorsement, as reported by Kommersant. Bagapsh is scheduled to meet with FM Lavrov and DFM Karasin on May 20. On South Ossetia, Popov stressed that there was no good way to "revive" the Joint Control Commission (JCC) at this point and he only hoped that after the May 21 parliamentary elections in Georgia, the GOG would choose a softer stance.

¶6. (C) Despite the MFA's earlier criticisms of Bryza's statements in Tbilisi (ref B), Tarabrin said Russia welcomed DAS Bryza's early June visit to Moscow, underscoring that the GOR continued to appreciate U.S. efforts to restrain Saakashvili from engaging in a military adventure. Separately, EU officials report that Tarabrin credited Bryza with preventing a shooting war.
RUSSELL